



CONGRESSMAN **JESSE L. JACKSON JR.**
PROUDLY SERVING THE 2nd DISTRICT OF ILL.

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.

JACKSON-PENCE IRAN SANCTIONS PRESS CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2010

3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Thank all of you for being here.

I'm Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr. of Illinois. I'm joined this afternoon by my colleagues, Congressman Mike Pence of Indiana, the Democratic Majority Leader Steny Hoyer and the Republican Whip Eric Cantor.

Today, Congressman Pence and I -- along with 361 of our colleagues in the House of Representatives -- are sending a letter to President Obama urging him to impose crippling

sanctions on Iran.

Tough and targeted sanctions are needed **now** to prevent Iran from obtaining the capability to develop and deliver nuclear weapons.

Congressman Pence and I don't always agree on the issues. I'm a proud progressive. He's a consistent conservative.

In one news article, we were described as "unlikely allies." In another: as "the ultimate House odd couple."

But make no mistake, while we may be from opposite political and ideological ends, we stand today side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder in opposition to Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Our coming together on this letter -- signed by more than four-fifths of our House colleagues -- reflects a broad, strong and deep consensus and conviction in Congress: We must take immediate and decisive steps to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and to keep that nation from becoming a more dangerous, destabilizing and destructive force in the world.

Yesterday, President Obama completed an historic, international summit on halting the spread of nuclear weapons, and to secure vulnerable nuclear material. I applaud the President for his leadership and vision in convening the largest gathering ever of global leaders in Washington to make the world safer and more secure from weapons of mass destruction.

But, there is no greater or more immediate threat to the President's vision and agenda of nonproliferation than Iran.

Without a doubt, Iran's nuclear weapons program poses a severe threat to America's national interest.

As we state in the letter, Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons could lead to an arms race in the region and beyond, destabilize the global non-proliferation regime and greatly increase the likelihood of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. It also would dramatically expand Iranian influence and threaten our allies in the region. It would undercut prospects for peace in the Middle East and pose a threat to the existence of our friend and ally, the State of Israel.

Simply put, a nuclear-armed Iran is a game-changer. And it's unacceptable.

Yet, after years of broken deadlines, ignored U.N. Security Council resolutions and stern warnings, the Iranian regime has acted with reckless impunity by continuing and accelerating its nuclear program. For the past year, Iran has stridently rebuffed the commendable efforts of the Obama Administration to engage in a diplomatic process and rejoin the world community.

We cannot allow this to go on.

Iran cannot hide the ball, control the clock, and break all the rules. March Madness is over. We must start a new season -- a season of severe sanctions.

Mr. President, we call on you to move rapidly and boldly to renew your pledge and do everything in your power to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. Now is the time for America -- together with our allies who share our approach -- to take the necessary action that offers the prospect of persuading Tehran to turn away from their present, dangerous course and choose reconciliation over international isolation.

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing you out of our concern that Iran is growing ever closer to nuclear weapons capability, a fact demanding immediate action on the part of the United States. We want to

assure you of strong bipartisan support for the tough and decisive measures that we hope you will undertake to address this grave problem.

Iran's nuclear weapons program represents a severe threat to American national interests. Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons could lead to the proliferation of these weapons throughout the Middle East and beyond, destabilizing the global non-proliferation regime and greatly increasing the likelihood of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. It would also dramatically expand Iranian influence and threaten our allies in the region. It would undercut prospects for peace between Israel and her neighbors, with emboldened Iranian surrogates enjoying the strategic backing of an Iranian nuclear umbrella. And it would pose an existential threat to the State of Israel.

Iran is making steady progress in its nuclear program. It now has stored enough low enriched uranium to serve as the core for two nuclear weapons. It will soon be able to install much more advanced and efficient centrifuges. Iran has recently begun to enrich uranium to twenty percent fissile. Its weaponization program now appears to be at an advanced stage.

Mr. President, you have stated this issue is a priority for your administration. You have attempted to engage the Iranian regime for over a year. You have gone to the United Nations Security Council in an effort to impose tough new sanctions on Iran. But time is not on our side. We cannot allow those who would oppose or delay sanctions to govern either the timing or content of our efforts. As you said last July, we cannot wait until we "wake up one day and find ourselves in a much worse situation and unable to act.

Accordingly, we urge you today to reaffirm boldly and unambiguously that the US can and will prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. We call on you to fulfill your June 2008 pledge that you would do "everything in my power to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon." Certainly, one way to begin would be to reverse the practice under which the US government has awarded at least \$107 billion over the past decade in federal contracts to companies investing in or doing business in Iran. We urge you to join with those allies who are prepared for action to immediately impose crippling sanctions on Iran. Only such action on our part offers the prospect of persuading Tehran to turn away from its dangerous course.

Mr. President, we will soon complete our work on the Iranian sanctions legislation that has received the backing of overwhelming majorities in both Houses of Congress. We believe that America together with allies who share our approach can force Iran's regime to face the tough choice between international isolation – if it continues its nuclear quest – and possible reconciliation. We can do this by imposing punishing measures on the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, rocking Iran's banking system, and dramatically impacting Iran's ability to import or refine petroleum.

We urge you to move rapidly to implement your existing authority on Iran and the legislation we send you, and to galvanize the international community for immediate, devastating steps. The hour is late. Now is the time for action.

Sincerely, Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
Congress

Mike Pence Member of
Member of Congress

Co-Signers Include (364):

Reps. Ackerman, Aderholt, Adler, Akin, Alexander, Altmire, Andrews, Arcuri, Austria, Baca, Bachmann
, Barrow, Bean,
Bachus

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Barrett

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Bartlett, Barton,
Berkley, Berman,
Biggert

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Bilbray

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Bilirakis
, Bishop (GA),
Bishop (UT)
, Bishop (NY), Boccieri,
Blackburn

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Blunt

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Boehner

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Bonner

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Bono Mack

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Boozman
, Boren, Boswell,
Boustany

, Boyd, Brady,

Brady

, Braley,

Broun

, Bright, Brown (FL),

Brown (SC)

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Brown-Waite

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Buchanan

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Burgess

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Burton

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Calvert

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Camp

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Campbell,

Cantor

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Cao,

Capito

, Cardoza, Carnahan, Carney, Carson,

Carter

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Cassidy

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Castle

, Castor

, *Chaffetz*

, Chandler, Childers, Chu, Clarke, Clay, Cleaver, Clyburn,

Coble

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Coffman,

Cohen,

Cole

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Conaway

, Connolly, Cooper, Costa, Costello,

Crenshaw

, Crowley, Cuellar,

Culberson

, Cummings, Dahlkemper, Davis (AL), Davis (IL), Davis (CA), Davis (TN), DeFazio, DeGette,

DeLauro,

Dent

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Diaz-Balart (Lincoln)

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Diaz-Balart (Mario)

, Dicks, Donnelly, Doyle,

Dreier,

Driehaus,

Elhers,

Ellsworth,

Emerson

, Engel, Eshoo,

Fallin

, Farr, Fattah, Filner,

Fleming

, *Forbes,*

Fortenberry

, Foster,

Foxx

, Frank,

Franks

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Frelinghuysen

, Fudge,

Gallegly

, Garamendi,

Garrett,

Gerlach

, Giffords,

Gingrey

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Gohmert

, Gonzalez,

Goodlatte,

Gordon,

Granger

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Graves

, Grayson, A. Green (TX), G. Green (TX),

Griffith,

Grijalva,

Guthrie

, Gutierrez,

Hall (TX),

Hall (N.Y.), Halvorson, Hare, Harman,

Harper,

Hastings (FL),
Hastings (WA)

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Heller
, Heinrich,
Hensarling

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Herger
, Herseth Sandlin, Higgins, Himes, Hodes,
Hoekstra
, Holden, Holt, Honda, Hoyer,
Hunter

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Inglis
, Inslee, Israel,
Issa
, Jackson, Jackson-Lee,
Jenkins
, Johnson (GA),
Johnson (TX)

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Johnson (IL), Jordan
, Kagen, Kennedy, Kildee, Kilroy,
King (NY)

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King (IA)

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Kingston
, Kirkpatrick, Kissell,
Kirk
, Klein,
Kline
, Kosmas, Kratovil,
Lamborn

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Lance
, Langevin, Larsen, Larson,
Latham, LaTourette

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Latta

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Lee (NY),
Levin
, *Lewis (CA),*
Linder
, Lipinski,

LoBiondo

, Loeb sack, Lofgren (CA), Lowey,

Lucas

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Luetkemeyer

, Lujan,

Lummis

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Lungren

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Mack

, Maffei, Maloney,

Manzullo

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Marchant

, Markey (CO), Marshall, Matheson, Matsui, McCarthy (NY),

McCarthy (CA)

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McCaul

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McClintock

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McCotter

, McGovern,

McHenry

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McKeon

, McMahan,

McMorris Rodgers

, McNerney, Meek, Meeks, Melancon,

Mica

, Michaud, Miller (NC),

Miller (MI)

, George Miller (CA)

Gary Miller (CA)

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Miller (FL)

, Mitchell, Moore,

Moran

, Murphy (CT), P. Murphy (PA), Murphy (NY),

T. Murphy (PA)

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Myrick

, Nadler, Napolitano, Neal,

Neugebauer

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Nunes

, Nye,

Olson

, Olver, Owens, Pallone, Pascrell,

Paulsen

, Payne,

Pence,

Perlmutter, Peters,

Petri,

Pingree,

Pitts

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Platts

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Poe

, Polis,

Posey

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Price

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Putnam

, Quigley,

Radanovich

, Rangel,

Rehberg

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Reichert

, Richardson, Rodriguez,

Roe

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Rogers (KY),

Rogers (AL)

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Rogers (MI),

Rohrabacher

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Rooney,

Roskam

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Ros-Lehtinen

, Ross, Rothman, Roybal-Allard,

Royce

, Ruppertsberger, Rush,

Ryan (WI)

, Ryan (OH), Salazar, Sanchez (Linda), Sanchez (Loretta), Sarbanes,

Scalise,

Schakowsky, Schauer, Schiff,
Schmidt

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Schock
, Schrader, Schwartz, Scott (GA), Scott (VA),
Sensenbrenner

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Sessions
, Sestak,
Shadegg
, Shea-Porter, Sherman,
Shimkus
, Shuler,
Shuster

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Simpson
, Sires, Skelton, Smith (WA)
Smith (NE)

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Smith (NJ)

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Smith (TX)

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Souder
, Space, Speier, Spratt,
Stearns
, Stupak,
Sullivan
, Sutton, Tanner, Teague,
Terry
, Thompson (MS),
Thompson (PA)
, Thompson (CA),
Thornberry,
Tiahrt

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Tiberi,
Titus, Tonko, Towns, Tsongas,
Turner, Upton
, Van Hollen, Visclosky,
Walden,
Walz,
Wamp
, Wasserman Schultz, Waxman, Weiner, Welch,
Westmoreland

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Whitfield,

Wilson (OH),

Wilson (SC)

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Wittman

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Wolf,

Woolsey,

Wu, Yarmuth,

Young (FL) and Young (AK)

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